

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ISLAMA 07219 141329Z
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02
SS-15 USIA-06 ACDA-07 TRSE-00 OMB-01 IO-13
COME-00 EB-07 LAB-04 SIL-01 NEAE-00 /101 W
-----051252 141334Z /45

P R 141230Z JUL 77
FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2842
INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA
AMEMBASSY COLOMBO
AMEMBASSY DACCA
AMEMBASSY KABUL
AMCONSUL KARACHI
AMCONSUL LAHORE
AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L ISLAMABAD 7219

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, PK
SUBJECT: ZIA COMMENTS ON POLITICS

1. GENERAL ZIA'S VIEWS ON POLITICAL ISSUES AND HIS PLANS
FOR THE FUTURE WERE FURTHER DEFINED IN THE JULY 14 PRESS.
THE PAKISTAN TIMES GAVE PROMINENT FRONT PAGE COVERAGE TO
TWO INTERVIEWS THAT ZIA HAD GIVEN TO AMERICAN REPORTERS.
IN A UPI STORY, ZIA SAID THAT BHUTTO HAD BEEN INFORMED
BEFORE HAND THAT THE ARMED FORCES WOULD TAKE OVER CONTROL
OF THE COUNTRY IF HE COULD NOT CONTROL THE SITUATION.
THE EGNEERAL RESERVED SOME WARM WORDS FOR THE FORMER PM
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PAGE 02 ISLAMA 07219 141329Z

NOTING WHILE THERE WERE INDICATIONS OF RIGGING IN SOME
ELECTION DISTRICTS DURING THE MARCH ELECTIONS, HE BELIEVED
BHUTTO HAD NOT BEEN PERSONALLY INVOLVED IN THE ELECTORAL
MANIPULATIONS. HE ALSO SAID THAT BHUTTO WOULD HAVE WON
THE ELECTION IN MARCH WITHOUT THE AID OF ILLEGALITIES AND
MIGHT WELL WIN AGAIN IN OCTOBER. IN THE NEWSWEEK INTERVIEW,
ZIA TOLD CORRESPONDENT EDWARD BEHR THAT THE PM HAD

SINCERELY TRIED TO REACH A COMPROMISE AGREEMENT WITH THE PNA AND THAT HE HAD PROBABLY AGREED TO THE MAXIMUM THAT ANY POLITICIAN COULD ACCEPT. ZIA LAID BLAME FOR THE FAILURE OF THE TALKS ON THE DISTRUST WHICH WAS SO PREVALENT BETWEEN THE TWO SIDES. ZIA ALSO ADMITTED THAT PRESSURE EXERTED ON THE MILITARY BY HAVING TO TAKE UP ARMS AGAINST PAKISTANIS WAS A SIGNIFICANT FACTOR IN THE DECISION TO TAKE OVER. FINALLY ZIA SAID THAT HE HOPED THAT THE ELECTION CAMPAIGN WOULD BEGIN AFTER RAMAZAN AND WOULD LAST FOR ONLY ABOUT THREE WEEKS.

2. IN A NEWS CONFERENCE JULY 14 GENERAL ZIA REITERATED ELECTIONS WOULD BE HELD IN OCTOBER AND SAID THAT HIS GOVERNMENT WILL NOT BRING ANY POLITICIAN TO TRIAL. HE SAID THAT THIS WOULD NOT BE DONE EVEN IF HE HAD ONE HUNDRED PERCENT EVIDENCE AGAINST THE INDIVIDUAL SINCE SUCH MATTERS WOULD BE THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE NEXT ELECTED GOVERNMENT. ZIA ALSO ANNOUNCED, IN A MOVE THAT MEETS A LONG STANDING PNA DEMAND, THAT ALL THE SPECIAL TRIBUNALS (SPECIAL COURTS TRYING PEOPLE FOR "CRIMES AGAINST THE NATION") EXCEPT THE ONE CONSIDERING WALI KHAN'S CASE HAVE BEEN DISBANDED.

3. THE LAHORE HIGH COURT HEARD TESTIMONY ON JULY 13 FROM FORMER MUSTAFA KHAR SUPPORTER MIAN IFTIKHAR AHMED TARI WHICH IS POTENTIALLY DAMAGING TO FORMER PRIME MINISTER
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PAGE 03 ISLAMA 07219 141329Z

BHUTTO. TARI, ASKED BY THE COURT TO DESCRIBE HIS DETENTION AT THE INFAMOUS DALAI CAMP IN AZAD KASHMIR TOLD THE COURT OF TORTURE AT THE HANDS OF HIS JAILORS. HE ALSO DESCRIBED A VISIT BY BHUTTO IN WHICH THE THEN PM TRIED TO CONVINCE TARI THAT KHAR WAS IN THE WRONG. TARI ALSO CLAIMS THAT BHUTTO THREATENED HIM AND SAID THAT TARI WOULD SPEND HIS WHOLE LIFE AT DALAI UNTIL HE "DIED A SLOW AND MISERABLE DEATH." TARI IS CERTAINLY NOT A REPUTABLE POLITICIAN HIMSELF AND WHILE IN THE PKNJAB CABINET ENGAGED IN VARIOUS PECCADILLOES FOR WHICH PUNJABI POLITICIANS ARE FAMOUS. HIS TESTIMONY, HOWEVER, IS AN INDICATION OF THE KIND OF CHARGES AND HARASSMENT BHUTTO IS GOING TO FACE IN THE COMING CAMPAIGN.

4. A PHILIPPINE ILO REPRESENTATIVE VISITING ISLAMABAD TOLD AN EMBOFF THAT THE MILITARY GOVERNMENT HAS SEALED ALL OF THE OFFICES OF THE LABOR UNIONS IN PAKISTAN APPARENTLY TO RESTRICT, FOR NOW, LABOR ACTIVITY. HE ALSO SAID THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAD INFORMED HIM THAT HE WOULD NOT BE CLEARED TO MEET WITH ANY OF THE LABOR OFFICIALS UNTIL AFTER THE ELECTIONS ALTHOUGH HE IS BEING ALLOWED TO REMAIN IN THE COUNTRY TO SET UP A FRAMEWORK FOR THE MEETINGS WHEN THEY WILL BE

PERMITTED.

5. IN AN APPARENT PPP COUNTER-OFFENSIVE AGAINST WHAT THEY SEE AS UNFAIR PRO-OPPOSITION POLITICAL REPORTING SINCE JULY 5, THE PAKISTAN TIMES CARRIED ITS FIRST SUBSTANTIVE POLITICAL COMMENTARY SINCE BHUTTO FELL. IN AN XYZ COLUMN, FREQUENTLY WRITTEN BY H.K. BURKI, THE TIMES ATTACKED THE URDU DAILES NAWA-I-WAQT AND JANG FOR ALLEGEDLY VIOLATING THE MARTIAL LAW REGULATIONS PROHIBITING POLITICAL ACTIVITY. PARTICULARLY GALLING TO XYZ ARE THE ARTICLES CONCERNING THE DALAI CAMP, AND THE STATEMENTS CALLING FOR BHUTTO'S TRIAL. THE TIMES ALSO CARRIED ON ITS BACK PAGE THE FORMER PRIME MINISTER'S STATEMENT OF SYMPATHY FOR THE VICTIMS OF THE HEAVY RAINS
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PAGE 04 ISLAMA 07219 141329Z

WHICH HAVE BEEN PLAGUING KARACHI-ITES FOR SEVERAL WEEKS.

6. NAP LEADER WALI KHAN'S SON, ASFANDYAR WALI, AND TWO OTHERS WERE ACQUITTED ON APPEAL ON JULY 13 OF THE EXPLOSIVES CHARGES UNDER WHICH THEY WERE CONVICTED IN JULY 1975. THE CHARGES STEM FROM THE EXPLOSION IN EARLY 1975 WHICH TOOK THE LIFE OF SENIOR FRONTIER MINISTER HAYAT SHERPAO AND CULMINATED IN THE BANNING OF THE NATIONAL AWAMI PARTY AND ARREST OF WALI KHAN.
HUMMEL

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: MARTIAL LAW, PRESS CONFERENCES, POLITICAL SITUATION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 14-Jul-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977ISLAMA07219
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770250-1183
Format: TEL
From: ISLAMABAD
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770758/aaaabyht.tel
Line Count: 146
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: e825d76b-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 24-Nov-2004 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1864563
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: ZIA COMMENTS ON POLITICS
TAGS: PINT, PK, (ZIA UL-HAQ, MOHAMMAD), (BHUTTO, ALI)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/e825d76b-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009